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POETS IN THE WAR

BY L. B. GILLET

THE war has stirred the world into poetry. As early as the fall of 1917 Mr. Gosse pointed out that more than five hundred volumes of original verse had been published since the beginning of the war, and the number must be double or treble that now. The output of war verse in Germany by civilians alone is reported to be upwards of a million pieces! This year's unprecedentedly large Christmas sales in books of poetry indicate the response of the readers. Do we really care more for poetry? Is the quality of the current poetry better? Or is it mere curiosity to see what the poetry of war can be like?

There would seem slim chance enough for poetry in a business in which man's chief object is to kill his fellow. In warfare itself, especially as it is conducted in modern times with all the refinements of invention for assuring the end of the enemy, if not of the race, and for minimizing to the uttermost the self-respect and glory of the individual fighter, even a born poet could find no inspiration. Experience of it has turned life black for many a poor lad, and sapped the very springs of joy. And the greater and more distinctive part of this verse has been written not by the on-lookers but by the soldiers themselves. In this circumstance lies its chief significance. Four years' trial of it has tended to make their presentation more and more uncompromisingly realistic. Many a poet who started with the vision of aspiration has ended with the lampblack and lightening of grim reality. The glamor of war is from henceforth utterly dispelled.

And yet the war has meant the regeneration of all the nations that have taken part in it. Mr. Masfield said last year:

I know what England was, before the war. She was a nation which had outgrown her machine, a nation which had forgotten her

soul, a nation which had destroyed Jerusalem among her dark Satanic mills.

And then, at a day's notice, at the blowing of a horn, at the cry from a little people in distress, all that was changed, and she remade her machine, and she remembered her soul, . . . and she cried, "I will rebuild Jerusalem in this green and pleasant land or die in the attempt."

. . . This was due to something kindling and alive in the nation's soul.

And this was but a reflection in large of what was going on among the individual soldiers. For as go the individuals, so go the nations. To lose self in working together for a great common end, to find a cause to dedicate oneself to large enough to satisfy even the most ambitious, to expend one's whole energy in standing up for others and laboring out their good, that was to truly live, that was to find one's soul. In this rediscovery of soul through the war is the true well-spring of its poetry.

Mr. Arthur Waugh, in a masterly article in the *Quarterly* for October, 1918, summarizes the spiritual evolution reflected in the course of this poetry as follows:

Springing from various and diverse temperaments, these poems illustrate in turn the honest soldier's fear of fear, his pilgrimage from self-consciousness to altruism, his absorption into the machinery of the war, and his gradual appreciation of the complex machinery as a collection of human characters, each individual and all interacting, combining at last into a unity in which self is merged absolutely in a sense of common purpose and general obligation.

That states very nicely the effect of the development evidenced in this poetry taken as a whole. But the most interesting thing of all is what it reveals about the men themselves.

Many of these poets were very young when they fell, and their verse, as one of their sympathetic readers remarked, is like a blossom just opening to the light. Among such perhaps young Captain Sorley is the shining example. Apparently even in his schooldays Sorley had an almost Rooseveltian enthusiasm for action as his *Call to Action* shows. His *Expectans Expectavi* has a deeper note. It is one of the simplest, manliest of the war poems of self-dedication. Sorley has written, too, in loving reminiscence of the country about Marlborough where he went to school. That was the land of his heart's desire. These poems of his are representative of quite a large number by others in

which longing transfigures the beauty of the country of home. Sorley's *Sonnet to Germany* is distinguished by its broad-minded and charitable attitude toward the enemy, not seldom appearing in this poetry, but perhaps the more remarkable in one so young.

You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.
But, gropers both through fields of thought confined,
We stumble and we do not understand.
You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,
And in each other's ways we stand,
And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.

When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form,
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm,
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But until peace, the storm,
The darkness, and the thunder and the rain.

Unless exception be made in favor of Robert Hillyer, who has himself served in a double capacity in the war but whose very beautiful sonnets do not directly concern it, and of Sergeant Joyce Kilmer, the attractiveness and nobility of whose life found but one of its many expressions in a handful of fine poems, Alan Seeger seems the only true poet America has produced in this war. Seeger had a spirit singularly intense, intrepid, and a little terrible, because of certain limitations in its humanity. No man in whom there was very nimble play of the sense of humor could, I think, in these times quite have lived his life. His nature had the striking simplicity of many a strong man's. He himself epitomized his life-story in the well-known sonnet addressed to Sidney.

A rich sensuous endowment he was enabled by the smile of circumstances to cultivate to the full. He seems to have been born with an instinct for the harmony as well as the color of words, and very carefully practiced his gift. At Harvard he went deep into mediaeval romance. His college chums write of him as rather disturbingly careless of what such fellows expect of a man. Before the war he seemed indifferent even to the publication of his verse, and drifted without business or anchoring interest in life. He seems to have been one of those rare cases where a man's latent power and ability warrant his taking himself so

seriously. For once in the war there was no doubt in his own mind as to his course nor in the mind of his comrades as to his ability. There he found and gave himself completely. In a very special sense he had come into his own.

In this way of so convincingly finding himself, of gaining through the war "the sense of the job" that is so wholesome, he is representative, I think, of the experience of a great many young men in the war. His spirit and enthusiasm never flagged, and this despite the price of sickening misery and discomfort, back-laden marches that felled many a man stronger than he, standing inactive against all the dangers of battle without any of its exhilaration,—the hardest thing, as he said, of all. The exercise of his physical strength to the fullest in a cause that satisfied his whole heart thrilled him. "Be sure," he writes his mother, "that I shall play the part well for I was never in better health nor *felt my manhood more keenly*." To do that was peculiarly satisfying to him. As he got nearer and nearer to the great testing moments of "advance," his spirits mounted higher and higher. He became *élan* incarnate. He is very representative, too, of many of the fighting poets in that his eye for beauty did not fail him, no matter what the circumstances in which he was placed. The frost-kindled foliage and frost-sparkled air are a part of all his account of that first glorious autumn in France. When opportunity offers he goes out of his way to enjoy the scenery. No beauty that comes in the way of his daily life escapes him. Seeger felt, too, very profoundly the sense of fatalism that creeps over so many men in the army. He, I think, is the best spokesman of this widely prevalent mood because by force of imagination he connects this submergence of the individual in the movement of the whole with the grander phenomena of nature, cosmic forces. This is best illustrated in the stirring poem called *The Hosts*, and in prose, toward the end of a letter he wrote for the *New York Sun*:

Alone under the stars, war in its cosmic rather than its moral aspect reveals itself to him. Regarded from this more abstract plane the question of right and wrong disappears. Peoples war because strife is the law of nature and force the ultimate arbitrament among humanity no less than the rest of the universe. He is on the side he is fighting for, not in the last analysis from ethical motives at all, but because destiny has set him in such a constellation. The sense of his responsibility is strong upon him. Playing a part in the life of nations he is taking part in the largest movement his planet allows him.

He thrills with the sense of filling an appointed necessary place in the conflict of hosts, and facing the enemy's crest above which the Great Bear wheels upward to the zenith, he feels, with a sublimity of enthusiasm that he has never before known, a kind of companionship with the stars!

It is granted few to live out so completely their true and inner selves. Alan Seeger put his dreams and loves and aspiration all into burning practice. He surely attained to the experience he once said he especially sought.

My interest in life was passion, my object to experience it in all rare and refined, in all intense and violent forms.

He lived his poet's vision. To realize what a deepening of spirit the experience of war meant to him one has only to read the earlier sonnets, richly harmonious as they are, beside the last, or any typical poem of Juvenilia side by side with the noble ode, *For the American Volunteers Fallen for France*. Seeger, solitary as he was, valued and enjoyed to the full "the bond of common dangers shared, common sufferings borne, common glories achieved, which knits men together in real comradeship." It is significant that the associates in the Foreign Legion he especially mentions in his letters, and the comrade who so vividly described his splendid heroic end, are foreigners, Serb, Arab and Egyptian. He speaks repeatedly about the special privilege and honor he feels it to march side by side with the Frenchman,—“the admiration of all who love liberty and heroism in its defence.” The rendezvous with Death that was his lot must have been quite after the heart of him whose poem presaged it.

One or two lesser poets illustrate in a certain sense Milton's characterization of a book as “the precious life-blood of a master spirit,” for their poems will live by virtue of the personality they express. Eminent among these are Captain Robert Graves and Captain Julian Grenfell. All I know about Graves is that he has a jolly little house in Wales and is the father of a couple of lively kids,—dream children most likely,—who romp into *Fairies and Fusiliers*, teasing their daddy. He is also the vivacious friend of Sorley, Nichols, and Sassoon, for they all write one another merry letters in verse. But reading only so few of his poems as are included in *Georgian Poetry* will impress you with his spirit. He carries everything off with a jaunty air. War may be tedious and hard and grim, but good fellowship

can do much. To match fortune with high spirits is a man's game, and if a man's, how much more a poet's. For a poet, long before the war, Graves had resolved to be. His poems are the outcome of animal spirits, whimsies of fancy, mirth, and fun. To even an underlyingly deep-felt poem on the death of a friend, *David and Goliath*, he must give a humoristic cast. In the heaven of his conception there must be found place for hunting. All life's to be taken with a joke. Even when you can't keep the tears back, it's to be played with the spirit of the game. To keep one's spirits on tiptoe and to find sport in everything is a service to literature as well as to one's comrades in arms. One can rest assured of Robert Graves' popularity in the ranks. Even his readers inevitably think of him as "Bobbie," the high-hearted and jovial, and they like his verse because in it there's so much of him.

Julian Grenfell will always be remembered for his versatility. He was one of those rare young fellows who do everything from hunting to writing a poem, and who do everything well. The balance of his many-sided life would have delighted a Greek, as Mr. Gosse remarked, the passionate energy with which he threw himself into whatever he did, an Italian Renaissance prince. Though he had ever been as eager in the pursuit of knowledge as of proficiency in manly games, it was the war that turned him poet. His most famous poem, *Into Battle*, he wrote upon hearing the news of Rupert Brooke's death and but a month before his own. "His lips must have been touched when he wrote it," was Mr. Kipling's verdict, and it is reported that a young officer has already fallen at the head of his charging men repeating,

The thundering line of battle stands
While in the air Death moans and sings.

The poem's intimate union of nature with the soldier's life and death is illustrative of a very marked characteristic of this war poetry.¹

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,

¹ Masenfield's *August 1914* is the great poem of the war for associating the beauty of the home country with the going forth of its men, century after century, to fight for it

And with the trees to newer birth;
And find when fighting shall be done,
Great rest and fulness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven
Hold him in their high comradeship,
The Dog-Star and the Sister Seven,
Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,
They stand to him each one a friend;
They gently speak in the windy weather;
They guide to valley and ridges' end.
The kestrel hovering by day,
And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they,
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, "Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing,
Sing well, for you may not sing another;
Brother, sing."

The figure of Rupert Brooke is the fairest immortalized by the war. Every one who had any association with him in life, or even once saw him, seems to have been struck by his beauty and the charm of his ways. It's not quite a "flaming glory" he left behind him. His attraction was too still and balanced and steady for that. He was more like a star than a comet. Mr. Marsh's *Memoir* gives one the impression rather of a strong personality as capable as it was beautiful, and one most fortunately circumstanced and befriended. For Brooke lifelong commanded the friends that bring such a nature out and are best able to appreciate it. No poet at his death was more fitly comraded. The beautiful letters his friends, especially the young musician, Denis Browne, wrote home from Scyros prove that. For once such letters are just as they should be. In his biographer and his critics Brooke was again most fortunate. Remarks of his friends help us to understand how he won them and something of the secret of his charm. To begin with, "he was the incarnation of the spirit of youth, wearing the glamour and glory of youth like a shining garment." "When he entered a room," writes Mr. Gosse, "he seemed to bring sunshine with him, although he was usually rather silent, and pointedly immobile. He lived in a fascinated

state, bewitched with wonder and appreciation." A true and constant eye to the spirit of things was probably most tributary to the impression of radiance he made. He was observant, perceptive, sympathetic, and as Mr. Drinkwater says, "It is intensity in perception that creates poetry." That, I take it, was Rupert Brooke's special genius.

The early perfection of his art, so far as technique goes, critics have already commented upon, and also the philosophic background before which all the detailed vividness of his imagery moves. This early mastery of technique together with his pronounced intellectuality might have made for a certain hard brilliance of style had not the life-content quickly matched it. From excess of abstraction the young poet was saved partly by grace of humor, which in his whole personality harmonized vivacity and culture to a degree especially rare in youth, partly by the fine balance his literary sense enabled him to preserve between the abstract and the concrete. The last is beautifully exemplified in *The Funeral of Youth*. He started with the two fairy gifts, invaluable to poets, a love for words in themselves, and a nimbleness of imagination that could run into ecstasy.

One wouldn't have to read ten lines of a typical poem of his without realizing what a fine feeling he had for words and for running them simply together and yet as if in instinctive accord with the harmony that was himself.

The clean-cut and delightfully sly expression of his humor is seen at its best in the poem called Heaven.

Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry.

The *Voice* is a very illuminating poem to be read in connection with Brooke's so-called "shocking" poems the effect of which upon his readers doubtless gave the young reactionary no little glee. Brooke was always just enough of an idealist, seeker after the veritably true, to be shocked

in just the way he vividly pictures there by any sense of shortcoming or divergence. In the first great 1914 sonnet the emphasis is often put on the wrong word in the line,

And all the little emptiness of love

It was just because true love was to him anything but empty that he wrote so many poems exposing its counterfeits. Superb rhetoric never rang truer than in his early poem, *The Call*, which was no hyperbole to his conception of what real love means. This strain in his poetry is but an outward sign of a moral fiber within him all ready for the deepening experience of the war and to be wrung into as fine and high a poetry as the idealism of the war called forth. Perhaps as telling as Mr. Churchill's much-quoted and eloquent words on the significance of the *1914 Sonnets* is the simple testimony of a V. A. D. nurse:

More than any other poet of the time, Rupert Brooke, interpreted and embodied the spirit in which our men have gone to this fight—not from blind lust of battle or desire of conquest, not as slaves driven to the slaughter by a military tyrant, but with clear eyes and steady hands keenly conscious of the joy of life, of all that they are relinquishing, yet willing and unafraid.

But *The Great Lover* and *Grantchester* are in their way as characteristic poems of Brooke. Their power consists in his quiet but contagious perception of the beauty and joy of simple things, of the deeper, spiritual significance of life. Owing to this insight he had, life was ever rich, wonderful, and alluring to him. To live life truly was to radiate happiness, to express it truly, poetry. No wonder Rupert Brooke lives in men's memories as the ideal of a young poet, for in his short life he yet achieved all three of the things he said made up the world for him, "one, to read poetry, another, to write poetry, and best of all, to live poetry." And the best was his in fullest measure.

The poetry written after the war had dragged on a year or more is very different in mood from that written at first. This change, conspicuous in the poetry as a whole, is pronounced in the course of the work of Captain Robert Nichols and Captain Siegfried Sassoon.

Mr. Nichols' poems of the war will be very dear to all who went out from college. And I think especially so to Americans, for in many ways Nichols' experience was like theirs. It was of just such lads as he that Miss Letts was

thinking in her unforgettable poem, *The Spires of Oxford*. Young Nichols had known nothing of war, probably little intimately of army life; once in, he felt the strain and terror and preying despondency of it with all the sensitiveness of his fine unhardened nature. And in a succession of poems arranged something in the order of occurrence he has dared to tell the truth about what he felt and saw. Terror changing into confidence and trust, grim endurance, heart-breaking incidents of life in the trenches, the sense of the officer's responsibility and his deep love for his men banishing all other love, the assault itself, are all there. No one, except perhaps Lieutenant E. A. Mackintosh, has excelled Nichols in the expression of the regard and affection of the officer for his men. In two of the manliest and most deeply felt of soldier elegies he pays beautiful tribute to friends that had fallen. He himself was severely wounded at Loos, and doomed to the harrowing memories of a tedious convalescence, to which I fancy we owe some of his best poems. Of the sorrow-laden emotions of his slow emergence he has told us in a series of candid poems called *Aftermath*. Many a young fellow, akin to Nichols in feeling and experience but without his gift of word, will clutch these poems to his heart as the voice of his own soul. In that Nichols usually sticks to the scene and action immediately before him, has nothing to say of the great purpose of the war, of enthusiasm for the cause, of hatred for the enemy, I think he is also representative of the experience of many in this war. What the ardors of war have been to him and to spirits like him, his poems also show,—the making of manhood, that is, through perseverance, hardship, and the seeing and doing of deeds that are at once savagery and heroism. In reading them you feel very close to a manly spirit in its hours of sorest trial. One looks forward with eagerness to the future work of a soul so awakened and of a faith come of such an ordeal.

A special sense of relief comes over one with the thought that Captain Sassoon was spared to live through and out of the war. His unusually long experience of it has wrought so complete a change in his temper. He is another of those big, all round men who, according to Nichols' account, wrote poetry before the war much as he dashed off of an early morning to the hunt. He divided his time be-

tween field sports and art. He loved music and tennis and books. Above all he had the poet's eye for the finer essence of truth which in poetry means beauty, and he soon learned the command of a magic of expression which is perhaps the first thing that strikes you in his earliest publicly printed volume. Lines you come upon there that seem to have taken some beauty of nature into the poet's heart and given it back illumined and fairly "drenched with the dews of human emotion."

Blindly I sought the woods that I had known
 So beautiful with morning when I came
 Amazed with spring that wove the hazel copse
 With misty raiment of awakening green.
 I found a holy dimness, and the peace
 Of sanctuary, austerely built of trees,
 And wonder stooping from a tranquil sky.

Such witchery and enchantment of expression mark Sassoon as unmistakably of the tradition of magic in English poetry. Wonder is born anew in the heart of every poet. In such passages we feel that Sassoon is himself of the wise about whom he writes,

Who gazed in breathing wonderment,
 And left us their brave eyes,
 To light the ways they went.

But after reading his last volume, *Counter-Attack*, and indeed many of the poems in *The Old Huntsman*, one wonders whether he can ever quite walk in those ways again. One wonders if, after all this haunting familiarity with killing and its attendant circumstances he will ever have the heart for even "the angry, eager feeling, a huntsman ought to have." He invokes the old spell of "paradise," the name playfully given to some of his earlier poems, but the fairy gift of speech seems for the time denied him. The curse of war has bitten into his very soul. Sassoon once exclaimed after commending Nichols for his success in voicing the manly discipline of war:

Now let us nevermore say another word of whatever little may be good in war for the individual who has a heart to be steeled.

Let no one ever from henceforth say a word in any way countenancing war. It is dangerous even to speak of how here and there the individual may gain some hardihood of soul by it. For war is hell and those who institute it are criminals. Were there anything to say for

it, it should not be said for its spiritual disasters far outweigh any of its advantages.

And it is to the enforcing of this earnest and deep-seated conviction that all his later poems are addressed. In *Conscripts* he tells us with grim humor how the experience of war gradually put into constraint the various elements of poetry within him. One cannot but hope though that there are deep enough springs of happiness within the author

Whose heart *was* a haunted woodland murmuring,

to in time win him out again of the shadow of war.

I sometimes think what is suppressed in some of the poets of lesser volume is more impressive than the most outspoken and glaring realism. This is true of the last poem I have read of Sergeant Leslie Coulson. He was in the war by September, 1914, having declined a commission, and for two long years he served in Egypt, Malta, Gallipoli, and France. How a sense of the tears in things had fled like the shadow of a cloud across his naturally sunny, carefree disposition he had sung in *But a Short Time to Live* with the winning music and spontaneity of phrase that always characterize the best song. That the joys of home-coming would make up for all he had undergone was the thought he cheered himself with in a later song but those he himself was never to know. No wonder after those unfurloughed years of hard service in a poem in another mood called *Judgment* he insists when all is over and known that he is to be the judge of God and not God of him. And yet he could write *The Rainbow* within a month of his death:

I watch the white dawn gleam,
 To the thunder of hidden guns.
 I hear the hot shells scream
 Through skies as sweet as a dream
 Where the silver dawn-break runs.
 And stabbing of light
 Scorches the virginal white.
 But I feel in my being the old, high, sanctified thrill,
 And I thank the gods that the dawn is beautiful still.

From death that hurtles by
 I crouch in the trench day-long,
 But up to a cloudless sky
 From the ground where our dead men lie

A brown lark soars in song.
 Through the tortured air,
 Rent by shrapnel's flare,
 Over the troubleless dead he carols his fill,
 And I thank the gods that the birds are beautiful still.

Where the parapet is low
 And level with the eye
 Poppies and cornflowers glow
 And the corn sways to and fro
 In a pattern against the sky.
 The gold stalks hide
 Bodies of men who died
 Charging at dawn through the dew to be killed or to kill.
 I thank the gods that the flowers are beautiful still.

When night falls dark we creep
 In silence to our dead.
 We dig a few feet deep
 And leave them there to sleep—
 But blood at night is red,
 Yea, even at night,
 And a dead man's face is white.
 And I dry my hands, that are also trained to kill,
 And I look at the stars—for the stars are beautiful still.

To make the record of even the poets who have written of this war with distinction in any wise complete one would have to add a great many other names. I should like particularly to speak of some of the very interesting lesser verse, for example, the sailor song of Mr. C. Fox-Smith or the simple lyrics of Sergeant Patrick MacGill that touch the heart and are much nearer the song stuff Tommy Atkins and Poilu and Yank would make for themselves than most of the more highly wrought literary pieces I have been considering. I should like to quote some of the lovely, fancy-quick lyrics of Francis Ledwidge. But I may only speak of two other poets, Lieutenants Robert Ernest Vernède and William Noel Hodgson, very different in age but similar in manly spirit and heroic consecration.

Such poems as Vernède's *Little Sergeant*, *Before the Assault*, and *A Petition* are not only the work by which he will be longest remembered, but memorial, because of their author, of a small group of volunteers in the war not often thought of and to whom great honor is due. I mean the men beyond what is usually considered the fighting age whose patriotic ardor steeled them to overcome hard-

ships greater for them even than for their younger comrades. What a thrilling satisfaction it must have been to such brave hearts to feel that they were proving themselves the worthy comrades of those younger fellows whom they envied and loved! To Vernède belongs especial credit. He was thirty-nine, when after two futile attempts he succeeded in enlisting. Nothing in his previous life, except his athletic prowess at Oxford, had fitted him for the life of a soldier. Since leaving college he had devoted himself to literature and to the care of his beautiful flower-garden. That his resolve to enlist was determined with the writing of *The Call* probably accounts for the peculiar force and attraction of that poem, and *A Petition* is himself in the high lights of his life and in his bearing toward the soldier's death.

Lieutenant Hodgson, on the other hand, was but twenty-three when he fell, thoughtful and old enough, however, to write a prayer just before engaging in his last action, which grips the heart. Strength of serious, manly character,—the moral fibre in the English strain which literature long ago recognized in the application of that epithet "moral" to one of Chaucer's contemporaries,—is the source of the compelling power of Hodgson's little group of poems. As you might expect, Hodgson had what he himself called a "passionate allegiance" for the grand old school of his education. In the poem called *Durham*, and especially in *The Master-Smiths* (the smiths are the masters of the school) and *Ave Mater-atque Vale*, he has paid noble tribute to the ideals for which a school should stand and for which it will be loved, and to the part that they play in the making of men. The event in his case proved how well-grounded was his faith that the old school sent her sons forth well-armored in manhood for the battle of life. His sonnet to a friend killed early in the war gives indirect expression to his own devotion to "things above the common run of duty." And he acted his ideals. On the way back to rest camp after furious fighting at Loos he dwells upon the thought of the divinity brought out in his fellow man:

We that have seen the strongest
Cry like a beaten child,
The sanest eyes unholy,
The cleanest hands defiled;

We that have known the heart blood
 Less than the lees of wine,
 We that have seen men broken,
 We know man is divine.

Before Action, fortunately the most familiar of his poems, is the poem of his life:

By all the glories of the day,
 And the cool evening's benison:
 By the last sunset touch that lay
 Upon the hills when day was done:
 By beauty lavishly outpoured,
 And blessings carelessly received,
 By all the days that I have lived,
 Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all men's hopes and fears
 By all the wonders poets sing,
 The laughter of unclouded years,
 And every sad and lovely thing:
 By the romantic ages stored
 With high endeavor that was his,
 By all his mad catastrophes,
 Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill
 Saw with uncomprehending eyes
 A hundred of thy sunsets spill
 Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
 Ere the sun swings his noonday sword
 May say good-bye to all of this:—
 By all delights that I shall miss,
 Help me to die, O Lord.

Such is the manliness of the songs that have come out of the resolution and courage of youth. Such are the lives that the winning of the war has cost us. The bravery of men's minds and deeds is proved as great, if not greater, than ever. And dreadful as the conditions and acts of war are, we can well believe such fellows as these when they say that the life of the spirit accompanying it has been the best they have ever known.

The essential nobility and loving kindness of man have triumphantly re-asserted themselves. These few poems are but one expression of the spirit that has dominated mankind and found expression in most diverse of ways. The bettering of society for which these men fought and which would be the only fit memorial to those who have fallen it is for us to assure.

L. B. GILLET.